Year 7: Unit 4a
Ways People Pray

Standards

By the end of this unit it is intended that students:

• value the role of personal prayer, and the Church as a community who worship together
• identify a variety of ways in which people pray
• prepare for and participate in prayer in a variety of ways.

Indicators of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values and Attitudes</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 consider prayer as integral to a full Christian life</td>
<td>It is intended that students will be able to: recall some key prayers of the Catholic and local school community</td>
<td>compile data on a variety of prayer forms in use in the Catholic tradition and significance of particular prayers for individual communities</td>
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<td>2 reflect on their own experience of prayer and personal potential to be prayerful people</td>
<td>be familiar with experiences of participation in worship situations</td>
<td>locate Scripture references for appropriate prayers to express personal meaning</td>
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<td>3 express their reactions to a range of prayer experiences</td>
<td>discuss the nature of prayer and the variety of spiritual expression within the Church</td>
<td>show ability to recite/construct different types of prayer and practise stillness and centering as aids to reflective prayer</td>
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<td>4 comment on the importance of community liturgical celebrations</td>
<td>understand the elements of a simple liturgical celebration</td>
<td>select/devise musical and artistic compositions to enhance prayer and worship in a liturgical celebration</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 suggest ways of creating an environment conducive to prayer</td>
<td>identify the essential elements of a sacred space</td>
<td>use a range of media and materials to create a prayerful atmosphere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spiritual Reflection for Teachers

A Hasid told the Rabbi of Kotzk about his poverty and troubles.

‘Don’t worry’, advised the Rabbi. ‘Pray to God with all your heart, and the merciful Lord will have mercy upon you.’

‘But I don’t know how to pray,’ said the other.

Pity surged up in the Rabbi of Kotzk as he looked at him. ‘Then,’ he said, ‘you have indeed a great deal to worry about.’

Martin Buber, Tales of the Hasidim

(Hasidim is a Jewish movement which places emphasis on prayer and experience of the Divine.)

• Consider the relevance of the story for this unit. What are the critical points of connection between the unit content and student life experience?

• The phrase ‘Stop! Revive! Survive!’ could be applied to prayer. Scripture encourages a similar path: ‘Be still and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46:10). How can you assist your students who live in a world that is Go! Go! Go! to ‘be still’ and experience the presence of God?
Links with Students’ Life Experience

Life and Prayer

While students have the capacity for prayer, some will not have great confidence in themselves as people of prayer. It is very important at this stage that they are encouraged to speak in their own natural voice.

It would be useful to help students experience a variety of prayer forms and liturgy which are celebrations of their lived experience. Assisting students to become comfortable with stillness and silence, and to trust their imaginations, emotions and memories, as well as their minds, in prayer, is the privileged role of the teacher.

Various cultural groups within the class may be steeped in traditional devotions focused on Mary or on particular feasts, e.g. Our Lady of Guadalupe, The Blessing of the Fleet. It is important to acknowledge and celebrate these traditions while offering students a balanced and varied range of prayers. This will assist each student to discover and develop a personal spirituality.

The Church’s Teaching and Lived Tradition

Importance of Prayer

Within all rites of the Catholic Church there are rich traditions of prayer and worship. While many students will enter Year 7 familiar with a number of the formal prayers of the Roman rite, e.g. the Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles’ Creed, it may be necessary to provide opportunities to revisit these so that all students can express a sense of belonging and unity. Such ancient prayers of the Church link the present generation to the whole Communion of Saints and to two thousand years of belief.

Teachers should raise the awareness of students to the seasons of the liturgical year and use the Scriptures as the source for prayer for important feasts, e.g. Pentecost and the Transfiguration.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Prayer is Communication with God

In preparation for the teaching of this unit the following references are recommended:

Part Four, Section One: Prayer in the Christian Life

2558–2758 Prayer in the Christian Life

2560 ‘If you knew the gift of God!’ The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realise it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.

2564 Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ. It is the action of God and of man, springing forth from both the Holy Spirit and ourselves, wholly directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God made man.

2644 The Holy Spirit who teaches the Church and recalls to her all that Jesus said also instructs her in the life of prayer, inspiring new expressions of the same basic forms of prayer: blessing, petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise.

Part Four, Section Two: The Lord’s Prayer: ‘Our Father!’

2759–2865 The Our Father (especially 2857–2865)
Explanation of Scripture used in this unit

When you pray, go to your private room and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place and your Father will reward you. Matthew 6:6

- Students could be encouraged to carry out their own Scripture search to identify the various kinds of prayers, e.g. petition, thanksgiving, praise and blessing. Scripture passages could also form the basis of a prayer celebration (see 'Liturgy Resource' on <www.resource.melb.catholic.edu.au>).
- The following references are only an example of passages which could be used by students to identify the different kinds of prayer:
  - John 12:27-28
  - Letters: Ephesians 1:3-12
  - Philippians 1:3-11

Psalm 136  A Hymn of Thanksgiving for the Everlasting Kindness of God (Indicator 2)

Psalm 136 is both a hymn of praise and a historical psalm. It begins and ends with the call to give thanks for God’s goodness and love (Hesed) which is everlasting (1–3, 26). The psalm celebrates God’s greatness in creating the universe (4–9), God’s goodness in bringing the Israelites to the Promised Land (10–22) and God’s great love for the people in their misery (23–25).

Psalm 136 reminds us that the people of Israel continually remember that God’s presence is with them throughout their history. Psalm 136:23 seems to refer to the people’s suffering during the Babylonian exile when they appeared to have lost everything. In 136:23, 24 the psalm speaks of ‘us’. This links the present generation who sing the psalm with the experience of Israel’s past.

The psalmist views everything that God has done as evidence of an enduring love for the people.

Psalm 136 is in the form of a litany, with each half verse (probably sung by a soloist) followed by a refrain (probably sung by the people). The refrain, ‘God’s love is everlasting’, is repeated 26 times – a beautiful message for us to sing and pray over and over.

Luke 4:42; 5:16 Jesus Seeks Solitude to Pray (Indicator 3)

Like all Scripture passages, these two brief texts need to be considered in context. Both passages show Jesus alone in prayer in the midst of his ministry of teaching and healing. Note that Jesus is at prayer (4:42) before calling the first four disciples (5:8–11).

It was an essential part of Jesus’ life to be in prayerful communion with God, whom he addressed as Father. This intimate relationship is one of the most striking aspects of Jesus’ life. It guides and sustains him throughout his life and is nurtured by prayer. Even Jesus needed to go off to a place where he could be alone in prayer, and be renewed and strengthened.

This motif of prayer runs throughout Luke’s Gospel: Jesus teaching on prayer, Jesus praying alone and with others, in all kinds of situations.

Luke 11:1-13 Jesus Teaches Us About Prayer (Indicator 2)

Luke is writing for a community of Gentile Christians who need encouragement to persevere in prayer in a hostile environment.

The distinctive feature of Jesus’ prayer is to address God as Father, the holy, loving, approachable and provident parent (see also 10:21; 22:42; 23:34; 23:46).

This Father will be there in the midst of the trials suggested by the petitions in the prayer: give us each day our daily bread; forgive us our sins as we forgive each one who is in debt to us; and do not put us to the test.

Here Jesus prays for the kingdom which Luke has been describing in Luke 4:16–30. This kingdom is about the inclusive ‘reign of God’ which breaks boundaries separating rich and poor, men and women, clean and unclean.

The message to pray continually and never to lose heart is reinforced later in Luke 18:1-8. In answer to the prayers of the disciples, who want to pray and live as Jesus did, the Father will give them the Holy Spirit, the best of all good things.
## Year 7 Unit 4a: Ways People Pray

### Standards

By the end of this unit it is intended that students:

- value the role of personal prayer, and the Church as a community who worship together
- identify a variety of ways in which people pray
- prepare for, and participate in, prayer in a variety of ways.

### Indicators of Learning (incorporating Values, Knowledge and Skills)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>Essential Reading for Teachers</th>
<th>Suggested Learning/Teaching Strategies</th>
<th>Possible Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>V</strong> consider prayer as integral to a full Christian life</td>
<td><strong>S</strong> compile data on a variety of prayer forms in use in the Catholic tradition, and significance of particular prayers for individual communities.</td>
<td><strong>S</strong> Share the story of the Rabbi (Spiritual Reflection for Teachers). Encourage student response. Use this as a lead-in to discuss student understanding and attitudes to prayer. Students include in their journals their experience of personal prayer. Invite them to share this reflection. Use this opening discussion as a reference point throughout the unit.</td>
<td><strong>Teacher Assessment</strong> Student self-reflection journal activity, and discussion of the place of prayer in their lives. Observation and enquiring during the discussion: What is Prayer? Brainstorm ways of praying to gauge students’ understanding. <strong>Peer Assessment</strong> Students check the reassembly of the text and compare the different versions of the Lord’s Prayer. <strong>Teacher Assessment</strong> Marking of the common prayers cloze passages.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>K</strong> recall some key prayers of the Catholic and local school community</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>S</strong> Any action in which we attempt to express our relationship with God is prayer. It is a sign of our understanding of ourselves as open to the presence of God in the midst of daily living.</td>
<td><strong>S</strong> Students recall and complete a sequencing activity of one of four common prayers, e.g. the teacher cuts the prayer text into sentences and the students reassemble:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Teacher Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **It is intended that students will be able to:**

- **V** reflect on their own experience of prayer and personal potential to be prayerful people
- **K** be familiar with experiences of participation in worship situations
- **S** locate Scripture references for appropriate prayers to express personal meaning.

- Inspiration for prayer of every disposition and mood abounds in the Scriptures. As aids to identify attitudes of praise, thanksgiving, sorrow, petition and faith, the Psalms and the Gospels would be particularly accessible. Students should be encouraged to see prayer as a daily way of communicating with God, and not simply a petition when they are in need. Catholic Tradition has always placed an emphasis on the link between our own personal efforts and the ongoing and active care of God.

- The following references illustrate the central role of prayer in the life of Jesus:

- Different ways of praying can help an individual express his/her innermost thoughts and feelings. Prayer can be silent or shared, Scripture-based, formal or informal. Even work and study offered to God are a prayer. It can be expressed through dance, music, mime or drama; through the use of art, signs and symbols. It can be based on poetry or prose.

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- Prayer is an integral part of Christian living. Jesus stood before his disciples as a man of prayer. He constantly turned to his Father for help, strength and encouragement throughout his life. He used prayer as a source of strength and spiritual renewal. Christians should look upon Jesus as a role model to help them improve the quality of their prayer life.

- The Lord’s Prayer
  - Hail Mary
  - Glory be to the Father
  - Apostles’ Creed

- KWL p. 109: Compare different versions of the Lord’s Prayer.

- Cloze passage: Delete certain words from the common prayers mentioned above. Students then fill in the spaces.

- Students learn the significance of a particular school prayer or hymn.

- Students keep a prayer diary or journal for a given period, recording a list of prayer experiences, use of formal and informal prayer, and personal reflections. Using a chart, record the prayer activities under the following headings:
  - Prayer Time
  - Type of Prayer
  - Place of Prayer
  - Source of Prayer
  - Reflection

- KWL p. 114: A traditional prayer – The Rosary. Dictogloss: the teacher reads the information and students take down key words and phrases. Working in small groups they pool their notes and reconstruct a version that has the main ideas and language choices of the passage.

- Use Psalm 136 and discuss its meaning. How is it a form of prayer? Students read other psalms in groups and choose one to be written in a modern-day version, keeping the main message of the Psalm.

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**Self-assessment**

Students reflect on their entries in their journal/prayer diary. They are asked to consider any new understandings of prayer that may be emerging with time.

**Teacher Assessment**

Completion of dictogloss and Jesus at Prayer Grid activity.

Observation and enquiry on the Psalms activities.
3.

**It is intended that students will be able to:**

- **V** express their reactions to a range of prayer experiences
- **K** discuss the nature of prayer and the variety of spiritual expression within the Church
- **S** show ability to recite/construct different types of prayer and practise stillness and centering as aids to reflective prayer.

- **Prayer can take many forms. It may be private, communal or liturgical; students should be led to a rich experience of all three types.**
- **Personal:** through personal prayer God is experienced by each individual in a unique way. An individual comes to know God by integrating faith with daily life. Through the practice of reciting formal prayers, Scripture readings/reflections, spontaneous and informal prayers, or meditation, a person can centre their thoughts on God.
- **Communal:** the power of communal prayer unites individuals. Witnessing the sincere prayers of other individuals helps one to nurture personal devotion. Shared prayer has strength through the combined voices of many praising God.
- **Liturgical:** liturgical prayer can be encountered in the celebration of the Mass, through the Sacraments; Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and so on. For Christians the Eucharist is the greatest prayer. Through the Eucharistic prayer, ‘This is my body given for you. This is my blood shed for you’, Christians come to encounter Christ in a most personal and intimate relationship. As such, the Eucharist demands special focus as the ‘outstanding means whereby the faithful may express their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ’ (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, n. 2).

- **Activity:** Using the Book of Psalms complete the questions on KWL p. 113.
- **Group activity based on Scripture references in the Essential Reading. Students in groups are allocated 2–3 references and discuss the central role of prayer in the life of Jesus. Students write a prayer based on the Scripture reference in any form and present to the class.
- **Group activity:** The Body as Prayer: Draw an outline of the human body. Write a description of how senses and gestures could be used in prayer; e.g. bowing as an act of reverence before God.
- **The teacher models one type of prayer (KWL p. 112), using an appropriate personal setting for the students.
- **Jigsaw activity:** Organise six groups into types of prayer – Blessing, Adoration, Petition, Intercession, Thanksgiving, Praise (see KWL p. 112). Groups of students read and answer questions devised by teacher on different types of prayer. All groups pool their information, and by retelling they become familiar with all six types. Each group then composes a prayer of each type which is relevant to their own lives.
- **Students read Luke 4:42, 5:16. What is the motif of prayer in these references? What does Jesus teach about prayer?**
- **Personal reflection:** What does this passage say to me about the role prayer can play in my life?

**Teacher Assessment**
Observation of groups working on The Body as Prayer activity.

**Peer Assessment**
Jigsaw presentations on the types of prayer.
### Unit 4a: Ways People Pray

**A Religious Education Curriculum Framework**

<table>
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<th><strong>It is intended that students will be able to:</strong></th>
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<td><strong>S</strong></td>
<td>Select/devise musical and artistic compositions to enhance prayer and worship in a liturgical celebration.</td>
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- Catholic tradition has long assigned a significant place to Mary as a model of discipleship in the Church, the family of Christ's disciples. Therefore, the great wealth of Marian prayer and devotion in its many forms should be explored and encouraged.
- Teachers are encouraged to investigate the spiritualities strong in the local school community. They should try to discover some of the devotional practices in the homes of students, in order to value these traditions of prayer. This will expand the students' experience and understanding beyond a single style of prayer.
- Sensitivity to the inclusiveness of language is urged upon teachers as they lead the students in both study and worship. The incarnate divinity of Jesus, 'the Word made Flesh', does not preclude an understanding and expression of divinity in inclusive terms, even though Jesus manifests God as Father and himself as Son. The eternal God is neither male nor female, but Presence, Spirit and Mystery.

- Class prepares and presents a communal prayer celebration for the group using a range of media and materials in the chapel/sacred space. The following needs to be considered in the planning of the prayer celebration:
  - the focus of the celebration
  - the proclamation of the Word of God as an essential part of the prayer celebration
  - sacred space
  - location: free of distractions, noise and interruptions
  - use of ritual and symbol
  - style of prayer used, e.g. blessings, chanting, mantra, meditation, litany, acclamation, dance, personal, music, scriptural prayer.
- Students make a class prayer board or prayer book displaying personal prayers/reflections.

### Teacher Assessment

- **Observation of students’ participation in prayer experiences.**

### Peer Assessment

- **Using common criteria, groups assess each other’s celebrations.**

### Teacher Assessment

- **Observation of students as they write personal prayers and reflections for prayer board.**

<table>
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<td><strong>V</strong></td>
<td>Suggest ways of creating an atmosphere conducive to prayer</td>
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<td>Identify the essential elements of a sacred space</td>
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<td>Use a range of media and materials to create a prayerful atmosphere.</td>
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- All forms of prayer involve the presence of heart and mind and need a focus of attention as well as management of time.
- Attention to the use of the whole body and all the bodily senses, and awareness of the importance and potential of environment for enhancing prayer, are worthy of consideration in educating students in prayer. (Refer to National Centre for Religious Studies, *Understanding Faith, Prayer Resource for Secondary Schools*, pp. 66–67.)
- Teachers are encouraged to provide opportunities for the students to reflect on the place of prayer in their own lives, not only in the context of this unit, but throughout the year.
- See Worship section of RESource website <www.resource.melb.catholic.edu.au>

- Students devise a definition of 'worship' followed by a class discussion on the different forms of Christian worship.
- Students create a list of things needed for a prayerful atmosphere, e.g. quiet space, suitable music, a focus for prayer, etc.
- Procedure writing: Students write instructions for primary students on how to set up a sacred space. A sacred space in the classroom is a constant reminder of God's presence. It can reflect a theme in school life or a liturgical season.
- Students read KWL pp. 72 & 73, and complete the Research activity. Read and complete KWL p. 115: Prayer chronicle.

### Teacher Assessment

- **Enquiry on students’ understanding of ‘Christian worship’**.
- **Testing of students through the completion of Procedure Writing.**
Celebration: Prayer and Liturgy

Throughout this unit opportunities should be provided for students to experience prayer in a variety of forms. In the same manner that Scripture must be read to understand its message, so too you must pray to appreciate prayer’s transforming power within your life.

**Suggested celebration based on the ‘Our Father’**

**Preparation:** A space that is free of noise and interruption is essential to this style of meditative prayer. Candles, quiet music, appropriate symbols such as a crucifix, icons or religious imagery which has meaning for the local school community all contribute to a prayerful atmosphere.

Ensure that students enter the prayer place in a quiet and orderly manner. Commence by explaining that today’s prayer will help them reflect on the words and meaning of the Our Father in their lives. Because this is such a familiar prayer we often take it for granted. As the prayer that Jesus gave us, an understanding of its message is critical to our lives as Christians. Before guiding students through the Our Father a relaxation process should be completed.

Students could respond to each section of the meditation using words and/or visual responses to reflect on the meaning of the prayer for them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Father, who art in heaven:</th>
<th>Where do you find God in your life? The people, places and experiences that bring you closer to God …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hallowed be thy name</td>
<td>How do you show respect for God’s name? Do you honour God by treating the good name of other people with respect?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy kingdom come</td>
<td>Jesus asks you to build God’s kingdom in our world by being a person of love and justice. What have you done in the past week to make the world a better place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.</td>
<td>What does God ask of you in your daily life? How do you show respect and concern for yourself … for others … for God?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give us this day our daily bread.</td>
<td>Bread is a symbol of the things we need to help us live – not just in a physical way but in an emotional and spiritual manner. What do you need to help you cope with life at the present time? How can you be ‘bread’ for other people in their daily lives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,</td>
<td>What recent actions or thoughts do you need to ask forgiveness for? Who are the people in your life you need to forgive? What can you do to achieve this forgiveness?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.</td>
<td>What are the temptations, worries or trials in your life at the moment? How do you need to be protected in your life?</td>
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</table>

Allow a period of quiet, personal reflection. Invite students to adopt a suitable posture to pray the Our Father in a reflective manner together. Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.

As a follow-up, students could write about or share their experience of the meditation. They could also consider ways to act on the thoughts they had in their actions towards others or their need for forgiveness.
Possible Assessment Tasks

**TASK 1: Using Art as a focus of prayer**

**PURPOSE**
- To reflect on a personal experience of prayer.

**ACTIVITY**
- Students write a list of words to describe:
  - the mood of the artwork
  - their response to the artwork.
- Students complete the statement: ‘*Lonely but not Alone* portrays prayer as …’
- Ask students to examine their prayer journal and consider what it says about their personal experience of prayer. This could be done as a written response or a quiet ‘think about’.
- Distribute art materials. Students create a visual response to their personal experience of prayer. Maintain a reflective atmosphere during this activity, using suitable music. Ensure students include a title for their work.
- Display the responses around the room. Encourage dialogue between students while viewing the works.

**ASSESSMENT**
- A general class discussion of what the artworks reveal about personal experience of prayer would complete the activity.
- The artworks could be incorporated into the prayer space for the liturgy.

**TASK 2: Jesus at prayer**

**PURPOSE**
- To reflect on the way Jesus prayed.

**ACTIVITY**
There are many examples in Scripture of Jesus at prayer. Luke 4:42 shows Jesus at prayer before calling the first of the four disciples, and Luke 11:1–13 shows Jesus praying for the kingdom.

Write a response to the following:
- Describe and comment on a Scripture story which shows Jesus at prayer. If prayer was central to Jesus’ life, what message does this give to us as Christians?

Use examples from the Bible to highlight your response.
Use descriptive language and words which express judgment.

**ASSESSMENT**
- Message from Christian Story
- Examples from Scripture
- Descriptive language
Resources

Essential Reading

Teacher Resources

Classroom Resources

Websites
<http://www.syndalcatholic.org.au/explanation_mass.htm> (Mass outline and blackline images)
<www.nccbuscc.org/nab/index.htm> (The Lectionary Day by Day)
<www.resource.melb.catholic.edu.au> (Worship section of RESource)

Unit Evaluation
In evaluating indicators of learning the teacher could consider the following:
• How well did students respond to the various prayer forms they experienced in this unit?
• How effectively have students identified a variety of ways in which people pray?
• To what extent did students contribute to the preparation of and participation in a variety of prayer forms?
• To what extent did students demonstrate achievement of standards?
• Are there standards that were not achieved?
• What changes (if any) would you make if you were teaching this unit again?